

GATEWAY REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015

**Gateway Library
7:00 P.M.**

(A PORTION OF THIS MEETING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION)

I. OPENING OF MEETING

BLANDFORD
Michele Crane
Terri Garfield

CHESTER
Shirley Winer
Martha Otterbeck

HUNTINGTON
Ron Damon
William Hathaway
Jeff Wyand

MIDDLEFIELD
Sarah Foley
Noreen Suriner

MONTGOMERY
Anne Marie Buikus
Sandra Haas

RUSSELL
Ruth Kennedy
Mary Ann Laurie

WORTHINGTON
Sue Levreault

SECRETARY
Stacy Stewart

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
Dr. David B. Hopson, Superintendent
Stephanie Fisk, Business & Finance

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
Joanne Blocker, Director of Academics
Megan Coburn, Chs,Lit,Ms Principal
Jason Finnie, High/Jr. High Principal
Amy Fouracre, Chs,Lit, Ms Assistant Principal
Wendy Long, District Grant Writer
Anthony Sabonis, High/Jr. High Assistant Principal
Alice Taverna, Pupil Services Director

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

OTHERS: _____

7:05 p.m. II. PUBLIC INPUT FOR ITEMS NOT LISTED ON AGENDA (3 Minute Limit)

- Mrs. Crane opened the meeting.
- Ms. Laurie, Mrs. Buikus and Peter Francis are recording the meeting.
- Mrs. Buikus said as a point of order, the budget is supposed to be taken up from 7-7:30.
- James Duggan asked if tonight's meeting was open for public comments for items on the agenda.
- Dr. Hopson said yes.
- Mrs. McVeigh thanked the members of the public that went to the hearing on Saturday for the state funding committee. Casey Pease spoke and did a great job. She thanked Mrs. Kennedy and Derrick Mason for their testimony. She was disappointed. Most other schools were represented by their administration. It has been taped and should be on the website shortly. She said now that the minutes of October 22 were published, school committee members should watch comments on bullying. The school committee should address those comments.
- Kelly Hawley is concerned about a bus stop. She has been in contact with Deb and Dr. Hopson. They live on Knightville Dam Road. Her children are expected to walk on the road and wait for the bus on route 112. In the past week three cars have passed the bus when it is stopped.
- Dr. Hopson has been emailing back and forth with Kelly and the bus company.
- Kelly said today two cars passed with bus with the door open and the lights on.
- Mrs. Laurie wonders if law enforcement has been notified of the situation.

- Kelley spoke to the police chief and he said he would talk to the school. It would be different if they were in high school. She feels the stop needs to be changed because it is too dangerous.
- Mrs. Foley asked who makes the decision on the bus stop.
- Ms. Fisk said they work with the bus company. The bus pulls off on Knightville and they are the first house. They will take another look at it.
- Melissa Nazzarro thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak. Her son is a first grader and she has a 1 year old. She is concerned the parents weren't notified of potential layoffs. She supports the teachers for doing their part. She thanked the administration and the other staff. She also thanked the teachers for accepting a small financial inconvenience to save staff. She hopes the school committee votes favorably.
- James Duggan asked if the MOU will be discussed. Mary Ellen Calderwood is their representative. Jim said teachers have worked hard to negotiate to save teacher positions. The membership voted to accept the MOA. He would encourage school committee to accept this agreement. It helps with the predicament we are in and shows support during these challenging times.

III. STUDENT COUNCIL INPUT

- Brennan Foley said winter sports started. There was a ski race last night. Austin Herman came in first place. The girls did very well. It was senior night for wrestling. He doesn't know much about basketball so he won't report. Model UN is planning a trip to NYC. Student Council is holding a white ribbon campaign in April. They are starting preparation for the semi-formal. They are also doing morning announcements. Mid-term exams start week.
- Casey Pease is starting a grass roots movement to protect our public schools and he has concerns with the new emphasis on testing with relation to the new teacher evaluations. Our elected officials should have a say in public education
- Mrs. Crane asked him to keep us up to date on what is going on.
- Mrs. Suriner asked how they could help.

IV. CONSENT ITEMS 11/17/14, 12/17/14

V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Pupil Services Update

- Ms. Taverna gave an update on Pupil services
- Mrs. Buikus had asked for presentations ahead of time so they can form questions before the meeting.
- Mrs. Winer asked what percentage in preschool is special education.
- Ms. Taverna said 7 of 15 are on IEP's. They are also including medical information too.
- Ms. Laurie asked if this transfers the responsibility from the doctor to the nurse and into the budget.
- Ms. Taverna said no, it has nothing to do with the budget, just how they handle crisis management.
- Mrs. Winer had heard a lot about the success of the SAIL and learning lab programs.
- Ms. Taverna said yes, it has been very successful. It keeps kids here and gets them back into regular education.
- McVeigh asked if Ms. Taverna could work with the finance subcommittee so there is a true understanding of that is driving transportation costs. How many students and what are the alternatives. Especially since the school state funding committee is still having hearings. A breakdown would be nice so they can write letters to legislators.
- Ms. Taverna said she can tell you what drives out of district – the team decides that a program can provide a therapeutic education. Also wheel chair busses and preschool transportation. It is IEP Driven. Ms. Fisk and Dr. Hopson have no control over it. The cost is really expensive. Now we get some reimbursement under McKinney Vento (for homeless students) and can split it with some schools. It is driven by the law.
- Ms. Fisk said a lot of the special education routes have monitors as well.
- Ms. Taverna said we are talking about 10 students.
- Ms. Fisk said a bus costs \$42,000.
- Mrs. McVeigh said she is not so sure the special education department understands how much this costs.
- Ms. Taverna said yes they do. The special education teachers don't do this alone, she is always present.
- Mrs. Coburn said we added the substantially separate classroom at Littleville. It is starting to get full. It is the needs of our kids.
- Ms. Taverna, Mrs. Coburn and Mr. Finnie work very closely and take this very seriously.
- Mrs. Kennedy said the hearing they went to is very interested in things like this. Is there any way a report that could be sent to these legislators.

- Ms. Fisk said Cutting Class was done by MASBO in 2012 which addresses all of this. It was already given to them.
- Mrs. Suriner asked what is the percentage of our special education budget?
- Ms. Fisk will add another page in the budget, she doesn't know off the top of her head.
- Ms. Taverna said we have a lot of tiered supports. Our special education staff is very good.
- Mrs. Winer asked with what we are doing with these kids, how is it helping them, are we getting them through school.
- Ms. Taverna said she and Mr. Finnie will be talking about this. We have a few students we couldn't keep in school. They dropped out. One went to the bureau of education when his mom didn't want her son to come to school. We did everything we could. We are always looking for ways to keep kids here.
- Mrs. Winer asked if they succeed in many cases.
- Ms. Taverna said yes, in many, but not always.
- Mrs. Suriner asked what is our dropout rate and how do we track success.
- Ms. Taverna said one way is MCAS (not the best way). Indicator 13 tracts post secondary. We had to send out a survey, we didn't get a great rate of return. We also create transition plans and looking at their life skills, etc.
- Mr. Finnie said there is an exit survey, which helps track students a little bit.
- Mrs. Suriner asked for the percentage of students dropping out. Jason doesn't know off the top of his head, but he will get it to her.

B. Professional Development Update

- Mrs. Blocker gave a handout of a PowerPoint.
- PD funding comes from the Title II Grant.
- Mrs. McVeigh said in 9C cuts you mentioned \$10-11,000 in cuts.
- Mrs. Blocker said the professional development grant covers this and there is a district portion.

C. Field Trips Second Semester

- Nick Vooy's said Model UN went to Boston last year. This year we went to Connecticut. They are looking at going to NYC University and maybe to the United Nations building. They are in the raising funds stage. Looks like the same core group of students as in the past.
- Mrs. Winer asked how many members are in the club.
- Mr. Vooy's said about 31, but only about 15 or so are going. Its \$180 for hotel,\$70 for transportation, and meals are about \$125.
- Mr. Finnie explained Cyndi Jensen's body's exhibit in NYC, focus is on anatomy class but it's open to forensics and biology. There is no date yet. The 7th grade would like to go to the Bronx Zoo which they have been doing for years. It includes Math, designing exhibits, science, ecosystem, social studies and map generation curriculum. The 8th grade takes an annual trip to High Meadows in Granby CT. The have all sorts of activities – pool, fair, field day, water balloon tosses, basketball, softball, etc. The 8th grade trip to DC and Philadelphia is on again for this year.
- Move all of these to old business for a vote at the next meeting.

VI. BUDGET

A. FY '16 Budget

- Ms. Fisk handed out a preliminary line item budget at the last meeting. Dr. Hopson went over a brief PowerPoint about the expenditure budget. Increases by area percentage, Increase areas by dollar amount, etc.
- Ms. Laurie said she thought the maintenance increase was because of the well.
- Mrs. Foley asked if programs with other schools is considered special education.
- Ms. Fisk said it also includes school choice and charter.
- Mrs. Kennedy has requested the object sheets for the whole committee.
- Ms. Fisk thought she just wanted it for the subcommittee.
- Mr. Mason asked if this budget includes Worthington as part of the district.
- Dr. Hopson said this has Worthington in it.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked what is the total expenditure increase.
- Ms. Fisk \$482,457.00.
- Mrs. McVeigh said this includes Worthington in the expenses. What is the estimate for pulling Worthington out.
- Ms. Fisk said about \$618,000 which was developed last year.
- Mrs. McVeigh asked if you have to determine if there will be school choice.
- Ms. Fisk said yes. We put that on agenda for the finance subcommittee, but we have yet to have a meeting. We haven't had a quorum the last two scheduled meetings.

- Mrs. McVeigh asked if the earliest start time could be 6 p.m. You would get more public participation.
- Mrs. Buikus asked to be added to the finance subcommittee. She asked about non-union employee benefits does it have to be in open session or executive session.
- Dr. Hopson said the benefits are negotiated.
- Mrs. Buikus said we are going to have to look at a lot of things.
- Mrs. McVeigh said in public you can have discussions, but non-union personnel contracts need to be done in open session.
- Dr. Hopson said both union and non-union negotiations are in executive session, then the approval is done in open session.
- Mrs. McVeigh said you have to come out with the results in open session and you didn't do that.
- Ms. Laurie said with the non-union we get the paperwork and vote on it. With the teachers we meet as a committee and discuss. We should be more involved in non-union.
- Mrs. Kennedy went to look at the documents Ms. Fisk gave her, it only went up a certain page and then there was an error.
- Ms. Laurie said a few of them went to the Franklin Regional Workshop on budgeting. They worked with other towns and schools. Some of those people mentioned that they get monthly reports on revolving accounts. Could you show us the funding sources for the line items.

B. FY 15 9C Cuts

- No new updates right now, Baker is now in office.
- Mrs. McVeigh said at the hearings it was their intent to reinstate the regional transportation . Aren't there several regional schools taking legal action. Is there a legal update.
- Dr. Hopson said yes, MARS has gotten a legal opinion. The law firm believes it is illegal. They are asking all regional schools to give \$500.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee

- Mrs. Buikus was hoping the minutes would be available at this meeting. She was concerned about something the superintendent shared on the blog which was executive session. She also asked if we should be discussing the bullying issue.
- Mrs. Crane said she spoke to the superintendent like Mrs. Buikus asked.
- Mrs. Crane will review these items.

B. Chairperson

- Mrs. Crane said we need an executive session at before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations, potential litigation and approval of minutes to return to open session.

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations, potential litigation, and approval of minutes to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Mary Ann, Jeff, Ron, Terri, Shirley Sarah, Martha, Bill, Sue, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Ruth, Michele

- Photo for the yearbook ad at next meeting.

C. Superintendent – Central Office Update (Enc.)

- Dr. Hopson said we were told there was money put into foundation reserve for schools losing towns, when we applied DESE didn't give us any money. We didn't get money from the safety grant, but we did get money for a technology grant.
- Mr. Wyand asked what the OPEB amount was.
- Dr. Hopson said \$20,000 to do a study.

D. Business Manager

- Ms. Fisk said we had a parent come to the school in the snow storm whose child had slipped out of the window. Bruce and Ed tracked him down in Russell. She wanted to acknowledge and thank them for going above and beyond.
- Ms. Fisk addressed Mrs. McVeigh's comment about no Gateway administration being at the chapter 70 formula hearing. A very close friend's brother got hit and killed by a drunk driver and she decided it more important to be a support for her friend.

E. Administration

- Mr. Finnie said we have a new Athletic Director. Matt Bonenfant is the new AD.
- Mrs. Coburn said she is in the midst of planning for PARCC. They have set up a testing schedule so we are all set for testing. Go to Pearsonparcc .com and take the practice test.
- Mrs. Kennedy asked to have a vote taken to have the creator of the PARCC come and do a presentation.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTING**A. Superintendent's Evaluation**

- They met tonight. Mrs. Crane sent an email to everyone with the question and answer document from the first management meeting. They set up a date to do the second management meeting so you will get that as well to be used as evidence in the evaluation.

B. Finance Subcommittee

- Mrs. Suriner said they met last night but there was no quorum. She was there with administrators. Mr. Wyand came later. They gathered ideas that need to be prioritized and addressed to help facilitate the work that the school committee is doing. No decisions were made.

C. Legislative Liaison

- Legislators just went into session. The Governor is getting into his process. She will be going to Boston in the next couple of weeks.

D. Policy Subcommittee

- They have not met.

E. School Committee Goals Subcommittee

- Has been dormant.

F. Community Curriculum Committee

- Community Curriculum Committee had a joint committee meeting. Interesting ideas are starting to percolate.
- Mrs. Crane said a sick bank approval has taken place.

7:45 - IX. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS**A. Worthington Withdrawal (Enc.)**

- Dr. Hopson said DESE gave Worthington approval to withdrawal July 1, 2015. Do we move forward with a six rather than seven town budget? School committee needs to make a decision.
- Mrs. Winer asked what about the lawsuit
- Mrs. Kennedy said it is still going forward, right now it is her and the school committee, she is hoping Attorney Dupere will file to represent us in court for the school committee. She thinks the five of the towns are for it. It is her town that is holding things up. First response today, from Worthington – they don't like that she used the law. She has nine days left to answer. School committee has an extension till end of February. She spoke to Senator Downing Monday. How can DESE make a legal ruling when they are a defendant.
- Mrs. McVeigh said regardless of which way it goes, there are still negotiations that have to be done. Timeline, project plan, who will be involved, attorneys in negotiating. We are going to have to find the \$30,000 to do an actuarial study. This is not going to be done in one or two meetings. The six towns left will be paying. She would suggest meeting more than once a month.
- Dr. Hopson said we did discuss that last night at finance.
- Mrs. Crane asked if Dr. Hopson and Ms. Fisk needed a vote for the direction of the budget.
- Dr. Hopson said there is a difference in a six town budget. With DESE allowing them to withdrawal do they get to vote on a budget that is not theirs.
- Mrs. Kennedy said if they are not allowed to get out, you have to go back to a seven town budget. In the next 30 days we're going to know if there is an injunction.

Mrs. Suriner made a motion seconded by Ms. Laurie to go with a six town budget. (if changes need to happen that is fine)

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 11 Nays Abstain 2 Absent 1 (Mrs. Foley)

- Mr. Damon said it would be easier making a six town budget, with side notes if we need to go to a seven town budget.

B. Superintendent's Goals

- Mrs. Crane said there were some goals which the committee thought should be either under school committee or the Superintendent. Do we take them out of Supt Goals and put it in School Committee goals.
- Mrs. Winer would like to move to keep them as both.
- Mr. Wyand would like to revisit this at the next meeting. He wants to see the goals again and look at them for the next meeting.

C. School Committee Self-Evaluation

- At a previous meeting we voted against using the document provided by MASC. The last time we talked about it, Mrs. Crane had asked for comments and she didn't receive any comments.
- Ms. Laurie's suggestion if you strongly agree you have to be able to strongly disagree.
- Mrs. Buikus said since we have so much going on we should put it off till next fall.

Ms. Kennedy made a motion by Mr. Damon to put off the school committee self-evaluation until fall of 2015.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 12 Nays 1 Abstain 1 Absent

- Ms. Laurie said it states in the MASC's self-evaluation for school committees, that there should be communication between the superintendent and the school committee regarding all major personnel changes. The school committee line item in the budget funds the advertising for new hires, and there used to be a personnel sub-committee. She would like to see communication involvement in this area.
- Dr. Hopson said the ED Reform act takes hiring out of the school committee except the superintendent and approval of the Business Manager and Pupil Services Director..

D. Boys' and Girls' State Discussion

- Mr. Wyand spoke to Laurie Belheumer who is involved with the Huntington Historical Society. She was going to be asking if they would sponsor a student for girls' state.
- Mrs. Long has an update from Bill McVeigh. They will vote before the next meeting so she will keep us up to date.

X. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

A. Parking Fees – Motion: Mrs. Laurie made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to reduce the student parking to a flat fee of \$25 per semester to start the beginning of the next school year.

- Ms. Laurie restated her motion.
- Mrs. Kennedy, in our revolving parking fee, there is an end balance of about \$20,000.
- Ms. Laurie said referred to the information given to us by Ms. Fisk; 38 to 40 students are driving out of 160 total cars parking so 20% of the use of the lot is by students. Also, our parking lot is in great condition and should last another 15-20 years. Hampshire Regional, Smith Voke and Westfield Voke do not charge and Westfield High charges a \$20 flat fee per year for parking. Wendy McCaul reported to the school committee on 6/28/14 that 33 to 38% of our students eat free/reduced lunch. The DESE2013 GRHS report card shows 26% of our high school students a low income. And lastly, on 2/26/14 the school committee voted 11-2 in favor to have on consistent policy fee for students who drive and she thinks this motion will go a long way towards that.
- Ms. Laurie said it was 11-2 we should have once consistent fee for parking in motion by Jim Kronholm, seconded by Mrs. Levreault. Mrs. Yvon prorates parking now, we can leave that to her. If the revolving account takes a dive, we can re-visit this issue.
- Dr. Hopson said the motion says \$25 flat rate, so it will be easier for central office, when are you going to reduce sports fees.
- Mrs. Garfield said now is not the time to reduce any fees.
- Mr. Wyand said it is unfair to students who can drive who cannot take the bus. He disclosed that his student is one of the walkers. It is a double taxation. The school facility is maintained by the taxpayers.
- Ms. Laurie said her daughter is a student driver at Gateway who works and for her own parking permit. This change does not impact her directly, so she is going to vote.
- Mrs. Foley is going to abstain because her son is a driver and parks.

Ms. Laurie made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to reduce the student parking to a flat fee of \$25.00 per semester to start the beginning of the next school year.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 7 Nays 3 Abstain 4 Absent

B. PARCC Presentation

- Move to next agenda

C. Winter Bussing

- Ms. Fisk said the major stop would be the old Murrayfield stop in Huntington. It would be a new stop in winter.
- Dr. Hopson has a problem with that, what about the kids who walk a mile to a bus stop.
- Mrs. Kennedy said if they are seen walking they are to be picked.
- Ms. Fisk doesn't think that that is safe. We could set up bus stops.
- Mr. Wyand asked if we will be charged for these students.
- Ms. Fisk said no.
- Move to old business for next agenda.

D. NSPRA – National “Public Schools That Work” Initiative and Resolution (Enc.)

- Move to next agenda

E. Review of One-Man/One-Vote Amendments

- Move to next agenda

F. MARS 9C Effects Regional Transportation

- Recommendation to take up F as Mrs. McVeigh pointed out. MARS is a nonprofit organization they are looking for \$500 to help move forward the lawsuit. The legal reasoning that MARS got looks like it is possible. We did put in additional funds for Worthington withdrawal.

Mrs. Kennedy made a motion seconded by Mr. Damon to suspend the two meeting rule to vote to give MARS \$500 for their legal fund.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Suriner to approve to give MARS \$500 to put the legal. Mrs. Suriner.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 13 Nays 1 Abstain Absent

Went into executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Returned from executive session at 9:57p.m.

Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Kennedy to approve the MOU with the teachers accepting to take a furlough day.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent

XI. OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Future Agenda Items

XII. INFORMATION

Information

Gateway January Calendar

January School Committee Meetings

Superintendent's Corner January 5, 2015

Student club collects pjs, books for Family Center

Students receive PSAT Scores and tools to interpret results

Superintendent's Corner December 22, 2014
 SEPAC meeting on January 6
 Students brighten veterans' holidays
 Superintendent's Corner December 23, 2014
 Foundation thanks 'Valley Gives' donors
 Sock drive for needy families
 Superintendent's Corner December 15, 2014
 December early release day
 Schools close for holiday break
 Jr. High Effort Awards
 Middle School Effort Awards
 Superintendent's Corner December 5, 2014
 Holiday concerts at Gateway

Warrants

AP#1043 \$219,050.36	PR# 12 \$361,325.34
AP#1047 \$49.92	PR# 13 \$361,661.16
AP#1048 \$92,373.81	PR# 14 \$336,938.37
AP#1052 \$42.41	

**9:00-10 p.m. XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
or earlier**

Mrs. Winer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Otterbeck to go into executive session at or before 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of negotiations, potential litigation, and approval of minutes to return to open session.

Motion Carried (VOTE) Yeas 14 Nays Abstain Absent (Roll Call Vote)

Yeas: Noreen, Mary Ann, Jeff, Ron, Terri, Shirley Sarah, Martha, Bill, Sue, Anne-Marie, Sandra, Ruth, Michele

- A. Union Negotiations
- B. Potential Litigation
- C. Minutes Approval : 12/11/13, 3/26/14, 4/9/14, 5/14/14, 6/11/14, 10/22/14 (6 Enc.'s, 1/17/14)

XIV. ADJOURNMENT Mr. Damon made a motion seconded by Mrs. Suriner to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Stacy L Stewart,
 School Committee Secretary